

"Adoption should always be the last resort!"

Kathmandu, 10 March 2007: UNICEF hopes that the International Conference on Inter-Country Adoption being held in Kathmandu 11-13 March 2007 will lead to the ratification of the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption and the adoption of national laws and mechanisms to regulate in-country and inter-country adoption.

"The Hague Convention is designed to put into action the principles regarding inter-country adoption which are contained the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which Nepal has ratified." said Ms. Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF's Representative in Nepal. "These principles include ensuring that adoption is authorised only by competent authorities, and that inter-country adoption does not result in improper financial gain for those involved in it."

According to UNICEF these provisions are meant first and foremost to protect children, and also have the positive effect of providing assurance to prospective adoptive parents that their child has not been the subject of illegal and detrimental practices.

Referring to the increasing trend of families from wealthy countries wanting to adopt children from other countries, Ms. Mellsop said, "Lack of education and oversight, particularly in the countries of origin, coupled with the potential for financial gain, has spurred the unfortunate growth of an industry around adoption. This means that profit, rather than the best interests of the children, takes centre stage. Abuses include the sale and abduction of children, coercion of parents, and bribery, as well as trafficking to individuals whose intentions are to exploit rather than care for children"

"Adoption should always be the last resort for the child. The CRC, which guides UNICEF's work, states very clearly that every child has to the right to know and to be cared for by his or her own parents, whenever possible. UNICEF believes that families needing support to care for their children should receive it, and that alternative means of caring for a child should only be considered when, despite this assistance, a child's family is unavailable, unable or unwilling to care for her or him. "

"We therefore call upon the participants of the Inter Country Adoption Conference to seriously consider these issues and advocate for child adoption mechanisms that are transparent and in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and The Hague Convention."

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For further information:

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